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(Written for the Graphic.)

THE
Drunkard's Home;

OR,

Lena Grayson's Triumph.

BY AZILE E. CROSBY.

CHAPTER I.

LILLIAN AND LIONEL.

On a sunny slope stood a quaint but beautiful home. Years of sunshine and shadow had passed away since then, but memory steals back to that home where lived one who shall figure in my story.

The sun nears its setting, its slanting rays fall lovingly over the earnest faces of the two standing at the gate.

"Lionel," she said, looking earnestly into his manly face, "say that it is false, that you are not drinking. I could hardly believe it if I should hear it from your own lips—nay, I could not!"

Lionel Grayson gazed into the trusting, blue eyes that looked pleadingly into his while a flush suffused his handsome face.

"Yes, Lillian, I was with the boys, but I took only one drink. Believe me dear, why should you feel so terrible over my taking a drink? Lillian, shall not be a drunkard. Why I detest drunkenness as much as any one!"

"Yes, Lionel, but mother told me"—and she hesitated.

"Go on Lillian, what did she say? but let me tell you first, your mother says to much to you about my drinking; as if I could not take a drink now and then, without becoming a drunkard."

"True, Lionel, but my mother has had a sad experience. She told me last night much as she hated to resurrect the past, that she has been married once before; that papa Haskell is not my own father. I never knew it till now. 'Tis a long, sad story. I could not tell it all. How he drank till he went to ruin and finally to his grave. She told of the long nights of waiting and watching by the lonely hearthstone. I must say it has cast a shadow over me that I can scarcely shake off. Poor mother." And she turned away to hide the gathering tears.

Lionel smoothed his hand over the golden hair and kissed away the tear drops, saying, "fear not, my Lilly, our morning sun has the gilding of brighter hills. My father has taken me in as partner in his mercantile business. We have a good trade, so put away your fears. I assure you, they are only phantoms. Our home is nearly completed. In a few more weeks it will be our home—your home and mine."

A few more words passed between the two, that were for their ears alone; when Lionel said, "Now for the good night kiss," little puss, for I must go. Ned Crenshaw will be waiting for me as we are going to the club, together, tonight."

"You will not taste even wine tonight; will you, Lionel? Oh say you will not!"

The sadness has passed from that fair young face, and only a sunny smile played over it now. Lionel folded his strong arms around her and with upturned eyes thanked God for the pure young life so soon to be entrusted to his love and care. So they parted while the evening shadows fell noiselessly around them.

Lillian stood at the gate watching his receding form till it was lost in the gloaming. Then the gathering darkness made her shudder. Could it be a foreshadowing of the coming years? But she loved Lionel Grayson from the depths of her pure, young heart, and love drove away the shadows.

She walked into the house where her mother sat looking very thoughtful. Twining her arms lovingly around her neck, kissing cheek and brow, she said "Fear not mother, Lionel only took one drink, so he told me, and you need not care for that." The mother heaved a deep sigh and thought of one who had filled a drunkard's grave, who had begun with only one drink.

Lillian is trusting and loving in her nature; tenderly and lovingly the mother had kept watch over the beautiful, and sunny child entrusted to her love and care. How she had led her life, and would shield and protect her from the blighting withering frosts that nipped the buds of promise in the early spring time of her own life!

Lillian looked up from her reading and caught the far-away thoughtful look of her mother's face. Reaching out her hands, she said, "A penny for your thoughts, mother!" "Nay, child, I would not burden you." "Do people worry over things when they grow old, mother? Oh, it is sad to grow old—

surely it must be! So far I have never taken a thought for the morrow. No trouble ever came to me but your sad story of my father. And I am so happy that I hardly think I feel as I ought about that. Papa has been so kind to me always; I could not love an own father better, so it seems to me."

"Yes Lillian your lot so far has fallen in sunny places."

John Haskell came in through the hall just then humming a familiar air as he hung up his hat. His is a genial face, one that brings sunshine, as he steps across the threshold of his home. His face is aglow with manly pride as he looks from one to the other of his household treasures that welcome his home coming. Comfort and luxury smile on him, in his elegant, beautiful home. Would there were more homes like this one; but alas there are other homes and other scenes far different that truth compels me to depict.

CHAPTER II.

FORESHADOWINGS.

Follow me, reader. This the early springtime—a bright May morning. Stay bits of clouds hang away in the azure blue. People come and go along the well kept streets of the city. Some leisurely as if to gather the warm sunshine that lies lovingly over all the earth. 'Tis a still Sabbath morning. The bells chime the hour for morning service. Many eyes turn up the street to watch the elegant carriages as they move on toward an elegant church. It is a wedding party, and the carriages are filled with beauty and fashion. The bridal party enters the church, walk down the soft carpeted aisles, and stand before the "man of God."

'Tis Lillian Carlisle, known as Lillian Haskell, and Lionel Grayson who solemnly promise to love and cherish each the other while life should last. The service over Lionel takes his bride, to their beautiful home; as he shows her the elegance and grandeur of their future home, his heart swells with manly pride, and as he looks in to the happy face beside him, it looks its own joy and expresses more than words can tell.

Lillian my wife, he said, looking into the blue eyes uplifted to his, sure your mother has cast her fears to the wind ere this."

"Lionel, do not let a mother's anxiety mar the gladness of this, our wedding day. Poor mother! she sighed looking away to hide the emotion caused by thinking of the dear mother whose life had been so overshadowed by her early sorrow.

We leave them in their new home surrounded with comfort and luxury, happy in each other's love and confidence, strong in the faith of manhood and womanhood to battle with the new life before them.

Two years and a half have glided swiftly by and are folded away in the eternity of the past. Clouds have not gathered and life has seemed one bright sunny day to Lillian and Lionel Grayson.

'Tis on October day with its Indian summer haze hanging lovingly in the distance. The autumn flowers of yellow and gold, purple and gray still lingering along the hedge rows nodding their graceful heads in farewell to summer.

On this beautiful evening in the Grayson house, people walked on tiptoe and talked in whispered words, while the red sun was sinking slowly out of sight. But the night of peril passed away and in the dawning of the new day a higher, holier love is borne in Lillian and Lionel's hearts and souls for their beautiful babe. Sacredly dear is the wife and mother now. Brightly glows the mother love on the white face as she looks from the father to the babe clasped close to her heart as the crowning flower of mortal life.

The months glide swiftly on in the home of the Graysons. Lillian's mother has long ago lost her fears. Lionel is the soul of honor, is rich and prosperous. To enter her daughter's home seems an earthly paradise where peace and love reign. Lillian is the same sunny child and Lionel the father and lover in one. Together they hang over the cradle watching the unfolding of the beautiful Lena their first born.

"Lionel," she said as he came in one evening, while the twilight still lingered lovingly around their home, and the evening shadows crept slowly in. "I am so glad you have come for somehow I am lonely to-night."

"Why, yes little wife," he said, going over by the window where she sat holding Lena and watching the light fading away.

Kissing mother and child, and sitting close beside her he said "What can it be Lillian that makes you lonely. Tell me that I may vanquish the foe; for I would not that sorrow should find an abiding place in our home."

"Oh! I must tell you," she said a Gipsy woman came here begging. I gave her something to eat and some clothing. She played with Lena and kept watching her so. Then she looked away and tears came in her dark eyes, and she said, "Such a thorny way! Oh, the long weary waiting and watching!" and she would tell nothing more. Then I thought of the Gypsies being fortune tellers and asked her to tell me something; but she only acted strange and said, "There is nothing for me to tell you lady" and she could hardly say the "God bless you ma'am" for the things I gave her. And I have hugged Lena again and again to my heart

since she went away, as if it were really so, and I could keep her away from all the sorrow. Do you think the Gypsies can tell fortunes, Lionel?"

"Nonsense Lillian," he said as if any one could look into the future. So you have been thinking that some time, afar off our baby, papa's little Lena," he said as he caught her up, and danced around the room with the laughing child, "that someone might dare to make her life full of sorrow. I call that borrowing trouble. No one must mistreat papa's baby," he said as he tossed her over his head and again laying her in her mother's lap.

"Lillian is tea nearly ready. This is club night," he said.

"Oh, and must you go? I am almost envious of the club, it takes you so much from us."

"Lillian, your mother was in the store to-day and took that silk and said you should come that far with me, and that you should not scold me for going to the club." And a merry twinkle stole into his dark eye. "You will go won't you?"

"Not to-night, I will stay with baby," she said, while she hummed a plaintive air and rocked the child to sleep.

Lionel went away and Lillian sat in the darkness thinking of what the woman had said. It seemed to haunt her still.

The next morning Mrs. Haskell came in and found traces of tears in her daughter's face. "What is it Lillian, what ails you child?" she said, while a troubled, anxious look crept into her own face.

"Oh, 'tis nothing mother, only Lena don't seem well and I was thinking if she should die." And the tears fell faster. Her mother laughed at her fears and played with the child that seemed quite well. But Lillian's tears lay close by, though she managed to keep them back while her mother stayed. After she had gone she threw herself on the sofa, hiding her face in the soft cushions. She cried herself asleep. She was roused by a hand being placed on her head. Lionel Grayson stooped over her and said, "Lillian, Judge Lyons is in town. Does your head ache? I am sorry I spoke so cross this morning. Believe me, I will never drink too much again. Only for that, I should not have forgotten myself. Shall I invite him to dinner or say you are not well?"

"Oh no! do not say that. I am quite well, I assure you."

She was only too glad to have the sorrow pass away and to her loving heart it vanished like a mist of the morning. To him she had given life and soul, and in her innocent, trusting nature she could overlook and forgive, and was only too glad to believe him and excuse him too.

Judge Lyons, their old time friend, came to the Graysons to dinner and spent a pleasant hour with his friends. At parting he laid his hand on her head saying, he was glad to visit a home where love, like the beautiful sunlight, lay over all the household.

Years have sped on. Lionel Grayson is prosperous in his business; but a shadow has fallen over his household. His little two year old boy, his beautiful Roma is dead. He is shaken like a reed in the storm's rude blast, for the boy was his idol. Lillian almost forgot her own heartache to be a support for him, but Lena almost refused to be comforted, she had loved her brother so dearly. Only time can wear away the sorrow that death brings.

Grandma Haskell came often to her child's home with her kindly words and watchful care. For mother and child were very dear to each other. She came in one morning, sometime after Roma had died and found Lillian walking the floor in tears.

"What is it, my child, is it true Lionel is drinking? I have heard it, but could not believe it."

"Who told you, mother, such a thing as that? I was putting some of baby's things away. I find so much to remind me of him." And she heaved a deep sigh and wiped away the tears, while she thought of Lionel upstairs sleeping off a drunken stupor and this was not the first time, but how could she tell her mother. She hid away her sorrow and they talked of other things. And the mother went away all unconscious of the anguish gnawing at her daughter's heart.

We need not follow Lionel Grayson, night after night, into the many places of temptation, into the gilded homes where many of the acts seemed innocent in themselves, where only friendship and good will were manifest toward him. He had pleasant, winning ways, had been reared in affluence and wealth and seldom chided for a fault. He had been the beautiful boy; the good man, but a certain force of character was lacking; and all unmindful of danger, Lionel Grayson was drifting along with the tide.

The years were checkered with mingled sunshine and shadow to Lillian. Each time he told her that she should be the last, and trusting woman that she was, she hugged the phantom to her loving heart and he pined on.

Other children were born. Their little faces lay close to her heart for a while, then went away, too frail to stand the storms of life. Mother earth reached out her arms and lovingly received them back to her bosom. None save the robust, beautiful Lena were left them. She is a strong child of eight summers, showing rare traits of character uncommon to one so young.

Then came the hard years of '51 and '52 that many so well remember. Among the number that failed, was Grayson & Son. The old man did not long survive the shock of the failure and the loss of his wife a few months before. All too well he knew that Lionel was drinking too much, and to that lay the greatest blame of their downfall.

Lionel, feeling himself disgraced, gathered a remnant of his property and moved west. Lillian's mother had died, so she left her old home of luxury willingly, for she hoped in the new one, to which they were going her husband would begin a new life, and the old happy days would again return. Her mother dead and her step-father gone to California, she had only her husband and child to cling to now.

THE MYSTERIOUS NOTE.

I was a harum-scarum youth, and for a dozen years of my manhood had no settled aim. I started out as a clerk in a country store, then I became a school teacher, next a clerk in a drug store, where I learned my chemical mysteries; finally, I became a law student; and it was my knowledge of chemistry—a science of which I am passionately fond—that gave me a start as a law student.

My shingle had been hung out in vain for four or five months, and I had not a single brief to prepare. What little money I had possessed after my studies were completed was rapidly melting away, and I could not ignore the fact if no fees should come in my way for a couple of months I should have to go on the street or on the prairie, and labor for a living. It would be no disgrace, to be sure, but when one has spent his little all in preparing himself for a professional life, and when he has set his heart and hopes on such a life, it is sad to have to abandon it.

I was seated in my office one afternoon, indulging in certain gloomy thoughts on the subject, when the door opened, and a middle-aged man in humble garb came in, and I recognized him at the first glance as an honest and industrious machinist, named William Campbell, a former neighbor of my father's, who was now dead. He was hurried and nervous, and I saw, at once, there was something wrong. "Good morning, Mr. Campbell," said I. "How did you happen to find the office of a poor young lawyer like me?"

"By accident," he said. "I am in trouble, and if I don't get out of it I am ruined. All the savings of my life will be gone unless I can find some lawyer smart enough to defeat the rascality of a certain man, and I was going along, intending to call on the first lawyer I should happen to see, and it happened to be you. As I knew your father well, and knew you when you were a boy, I thought I could do no better than to put this case in your hands. I'd at least be sure of fair treatment, I thought."

"You would be sure of that at the hands of any lawyer to whom you would intrust your case," said I. "Now let me hear what it is, and I will see what can be done."

"Well, it is this: I've worked quite hard all my life at my trade, and accumulated some money—about six thousand dollars, in fact. I have seven children I should like to provide for, and it has been my steady aim to increase my money all I could. A year ago, a friend of mine, who is in the same business I am in, told me if he could take a partner in the spring, and if I should go in with him, we could make a lot of money. I looked into the matter, and found he was not mistaken about it. I saw I could, in a few years, increase my six thousand to twenty thousand, and I told him I would be ready to join him in the business when the time came. Meantime my money was lying in the bank, where I ought to have left it, drawing five and a half per cent interest."

"Shortly after I made this arrangement with my friend about the partnership, a man I knew well, and had great confidence in, came to me and asked me to lend him the money till I should want it at the end of the year, and he could readily return it by that time, and he would give me eight per cent. So I let him have it, and now it is due and I can't get it back."

"Has he any property?"

"Yes—any amount of it; but I have since understood he's a slippery fellow, but I had not known that before."

"But you took his note, surely," said I.

"Yes, but I can't find it; that's what troubles me. I called on him yesterday and told him so, and he said he had no recollection of borrowing any money from me; if I had the note he would pay it; if I hadn't he certainly would not."

"And you can't find the note?"

"No."

"What did you do with it?"

"I put it in this pocketbook where I kept all my important papers; but when I came to look for it among some other notes, and the like, I could not find it."

He produced a large old-fashioned leather pocketbook, as he spoke, and I looked through it and examined a lot of receipts and notes that were packed together in one of its pockets, thinking that two of the papers might be sticking together.

"There is no promissory note for that amount here," I said. "But what is the blank sheet of paper doing here?" and I took up a sheet of white paper that I found among the documents.

"I don't know."

"Who is the man who gave you the note?"

"Alexander Bolton, the druggist."

I knew Alexander Bolton well. He was wealthy and penurious, and had the name of being very tricky. I was satisfied that Mr. Campbell was telling the truth. I was as well convinced that Alexander Bolton was not a man who would be likely to forget having borrowed such a sum as six thousand dollars, and I jumped at the conclusion that he had played some cunning trick to wrong the confiding mechanic out of the fruits of many years of labor.

But what was the trick? That was the question that puzzled me.

"Have you had this pocketbook in a secure place ever since he gave you the note?" I asked.

"Yes; under lock and key, where no one could touch it but myself."

"Are you sure that it has been ever since impossible for any one to find it to perjure the note?"

"I am perfectly sure of that. The lock of the desk in which I have kept it is one I made myself. There is but one key in the world that will open it, and here it is," he said, producing from his pocket a bright steel key, of very odd outline. "Not a single thing has ever been disturbed in that desk."

I missed a few moments as I again casually overhauled the papers, then said:

"My Campbell, I don't mean to say that Mr. Bolton is dishonest, but might he not have handed you this blank sheet of paper, and slipped the note into his pocketbook with the money you lent him?"

"No, that is out of the question. I examined the note again after I reached home before I put the pocketbook away, to see that no mistake had been made; found it all right, plain as day in every letter and figure, and I remember as well as though it had been yesterday; I even remember noticing how bright the ink was; it had a reddish tinge."

I was in the act of handing the pocketbook back to him, as he said this, but a thought suddenly struck me, and I opened it again.

"Mr. Campbell," I said carelessly, "do you remember whether the note was filled out on a blank form or not?"

"It was not; he wrote it out in full himself, on the top of foolscap, and cut it off with a pair of scissors. I remember everything about it very clearly, for it was about all I had in the world, and to me it was a very essential affair."

I examined the strip of white paper, for a startling idea had already taken shape in my mind, and I perceived that it had been cut from the top of a foolscap, evidently with a pair of scissors.

"Do you know how you happened to place the slip of white paper in here?"

"No, I don't remember placing it there; I might have done so, thinking it would some time be handy to figure on."

"Will you let me have it?"

"Certainly," he replied, somewhat surprised at my modest request.

"Well," I said, as I laid the paper on the table, and set the ink stand on it, "I am going to make an effort to recover your money for you; I shall bring suit against Bolton at once, and have him summoned to appear before Judge—You can, of course, swear that you have lent him the money, and the note he gave you is missing."

"Yes, with a clear conscience; I could not be mistaken about it."

"Then call on me to-morrow morning at nine o'clock."

"I will."

He left me, and I took the slip of paper and examined it closely. It seemed to be nothing but a stray fragment of foolscap, but it occurred to me that it might have a history. It was here that my chemical knowledge came into play.

I remembered that Alexander Bolton was a chemist; and I also remembered that an ink could be made with aniline, iodide of ammonia and chloride of zinc, in certain proportions, which had a fresh, reddish tinge, and that it would fade out entirely in four days, leaving no mark on the paper. Bolton, no doubt, knew this secret and used it to swindle the mechanic out of his earnings.

The more I considered this subject the more I became convinced that such was the case. The note had been written with fading ink.

But there was another chemical secret which probably Bolton did not know, as I had discovered it myself by accident. This treacherous ink, on fading out, leaves the zinc in invisible atoms in the paper, so that every fine trace may be restored by the application of a certain solution of sulphate of iron and hydrate of calcium. So, no sooner had Mr. Campbell left my office than I hurried to a drug store where I obtained the solution.

Returning to my office, I saturated a piece of blotting paper with a drop of it and applied it to a corner of the blank paper. The result made me jump up, clap my hands and yell with delight, for fresh and clear the dollar came out. I knew not what hidden words the paper contained, and I placed it in my pocketbook, corked up the

vial—which was destined to prove a vial of wrath to Mr. Bolton—and went immediately and brought suit against him for the recovery of the amount of the note, with interest and costs.

A few days later Alexander Bolton stood at the bar of justice to answer in his own behalf. It seemed so easy to him, that he did not deem it necessary to employ any counsel.

Mr. Campbell swore to the facts he had related to me concerning the loan. Mr. Bolton answered, on oath, that he had no recollection of ever borrowing any money of the plaintiff. If he did, where was the note? He would thank anybody to produce it.

"Your honor," said I, addressing the judge, "I think I can produce the note in question."

"I understood you that it was not to be found," said Judge D—, somewhat surprised.

"It has never been lost," I said as I took from my pocket the blank slip of paper and passed it to him. "This is it."

"I hope you are not trifling with the court," he said, as he glanced at both sides and perceived that it was blank.